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COMMENT ON CERTAIN BIRDS OF BAJA
CALIFORNIA, INCLUDING DESCRIPTIONS
OF THREE NEW RACES

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This paper is one of a series, some already published, some in press, or in manuscript, dealing with taxonomic problems which have been encountered during preparation of a distributional work on the birds of Baja California. It is published at this time because that territory is within the scope of the American Ornithologists' Union Check-list and the cases here presented must be acted upon by the Committee now engaged in the preparation of a new edition. As in previous papers the content is limited to new proposals or to endorsement or rejection of others which require Committee action.

As in the past I have had unrestricted access to various collections, both institutional and private, acknowledgment of which will be made later. However, I must mention here the aid provided by the courtesies of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy and the San Diego Natural History Museum, since the greater part of the data in the present instance have been acquired at those institutions.

Rallus longirostris magdalena subsp. nov.

Magdalena Clapper Rail

Type.—Breeding male adult, No. 59279, Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy; Almejas Bay, Santa Margarita Island, Magdalena Bay, Baja California, June 7, 1931; collected by Chester C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—Darkest and most richly colored of the Pacific coast clapper rails. Most nearly similar in color to *Rallus longirostris beldingi* of the Gulf coast and islands of extreme southern Baja California but black mesial streaking of upper parts wider and margins of feathers "Olive-Brown" instead of "Buffy Brown" or "Deep Olive"; shoulders "Natal Brown" instead of "Verona Brown"; anterior underparts "Kaiser Brown" or "Russet" instead of "Mikado Brown"; sides and flanks "Dark Olive" instead of "Deep Olive," with the white barring consequently more conspicuous. Bill slightly longer; wing slightly shorter.

Range.—Tidal lagoons of the Pacific coast of Baja California from Magdalena Bay north to Scammon Lagoon and probably to San Quintín Bay. Casual in fall dispersal south to Todos Santos, lat. 23° 27'.

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Remarks.—Although inclined strongly to believe that the arrangement of Peters (Check-list of Birds of the World, 2:159, 1934), whereby the western rails are treated as races of *Rallus elegans*, is preferable to the species name *longirostris*, I here use the latter in the interest of conformity to current usage.

In most typical form and greatest differentiation from *beldingi*, the new race here proposed is restricted to the extensive mangrove lagoons and estuaries of Magdalena Bay. An extensive series of twenty-five specimens (San Diego Mus.) from Pond and San Ignacio lagoons is essentially similar in darker underparts, broad dorsal streaking, and longer bill, but the dorsal coloration is more varied and some individuals approach the more olive tones of *Rallus longirostris levipes* of southern California. A similar comment applies to a small series of four specimens from Scammon Lagoon. Whether this condition signifies intergradation or whether two color phases are involved I am not prepared to say. However, certain measurements suggest the former possibility. Three specimens, all collected in midwinter, have been examined from San Quintín Bay. Two of these (then in the collection of W. M. Pierce) I at one time identified as *beldingi*. One of them has been re-examined at this time in the Shefler collection and is identified as *magdalenae*. The third specimen, in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy, is to be identified only as *levipes*. My belief at this time is that *magdalenae* is the resident form at San Quintín, with *levipes* present as a winter casual.

Measurements.—

	Wing		Culmen		Depth of bill at nostril				
6 male <i>magdalenae</i>	144.5	(148.5)	153.5	60.0	(61.5)	63.7	8.8	(9.0)	9.2
12 male <i>beldingi</i>	150.0	(154.0)	161.0	55.5	(58.2)	61.0	8.3	(8.6)	9.0
5 female <i>magdalenae</i> ..	141.0	(143.1)	146.0	51.0	(54.8)	57.0	7.9	(8.0)	8.1
5 female <i>beldingi</i>	143.0	(146.0)	149.5	50.7	(52.9)	54.6	7.0	(7.5)	7.8

Specimens examined. — *R. l. magdalenae*, 41 (Todos Santos, lat. 23°27' 1 [not breeding]; Almejas Bay, Santa Margarita Island, 3; San Jorge, 7; Pond and San Ignacio Lagoons, 25; Scammon Lagoon, 4; San Quintín Bay, 1). *R. l. beldingi*, 17 (La Paz and vicinity, 14; San José Island, 3). *R. l. levipes*, series from southern California; 1 from San Quintín, Baja California.

Zenaida asiatica clara subsp. nov.

San Lucas White-winged Dove

Type.—Male adult, No. 54990, Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy; Agua Caliente, alt. 800 feet, June 8, 1929; collected by Chester C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—A relatively large race of *Zenaida asiatica* and in this respect not distinguishable from *Zenaida asiatica mearnsi* of the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Differs from *mearnsi* in lighter coloration throughout; anterior underparts "Avellaneous" with a distinct ochraceous or yellowish tint instead of "Light Drab"; posterior underparts "Gull Gray" instead of "Pale Neutral Gray" or "Light Neutral Gray."

Range.—Resident in the Cape region of Baja California.

Remarks.—The abrupt character of the Cape avifauna is again emphasized in the case of the white-winged dove. Numerous specimens of *mearnsi* have been examined from practically the whole of the peninsula

south almost to the Cape region and in none of them can I detect any significant departure from the California, Arizona, and Sonora populations. It is to be expected that *mearnsi* will be found at times in the Cape region as a result of post-breeding dispersal or other seasonal movement but I do not anticipate any great number since over most of the peninsula it seems to be essentially resident. At the moment there is one example of *mearnsi* at hand from La Paz, a fully grown bird of the year collected July 17, 1931. Incidentally, the racial characters of *mearnsi* and *clara* are just as evident in feathered nestlings as they are in mature birds.

Specimens examined.—*Z. a. mearnsi*: series from southeastern California, Arizona, and Sonora: Baja California, (San Fernando, 3 [Nov. 1; Jan. 2-3]); San José, lat. 31, [Oct. 1]; El Cajón Cañon, 3 [May 16-June 3]; Las Palmas Cañon, 1 [Nov. 4]; San Agustín, 1 [Dec. 1]; 25 miles N. of Punta Prieta, 1 [Oct. 27]; 4 miles E. of El Arco, 1 [Apr. 22]; 10 miles W. of Calmallí, 1 [Feb. 23]; San Ignacio, 7 [Feb. 27; Apr. 11-May 3]; San Andrés, 1 [Oct. 21]; Mesquital, 1 [Apr. 20]; Comodú, 2 [Apr. 11]; La Paz, 1 [July 17]. *Z. a. clara*, 13 (El Sanz, 3 [Dec. 8-10]; Agua Caliente, 7 [June 5-13]; 7 miles S. of Miraflores, 1 [Nov. 1]; 3 miles S. of La Paz, 1 [Feb. 7]; Santa Anita, 1 [Apr. 25].

Colaptes cafer martirensis Grinnell

[= *Colaptes cafer collaris* Vigors]

For some years I have entertained the suspicion that this currently recognized race could not be maintained as distinct from *Colaptes cafer collaris*. It was based on four males and three females (in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy), only two of which are summer birds and the remainder taken in the month of October. The two summer individuals, taken in May and June and presumably belonging to the breeding population of the area, I am unable to distinguish on any basis from the red-shafted flickers resident in southern California. The remaining five were collected in fall between the dates of October 8 and 22. The pileum of these is of average brownish *collaris* tone in two, brownish gray in one, and distinctly gray in two, one of them the type of *martirensis*. These last two are, to me, indistinguishable from the red-shafted flickers of the central interior of the continent in which the pileum approaches the gray of *Colaptes auratus*. Flickers of this appearance are common in fall and winter throughout the southwest. As further indication of the source of origin of part of the series upon which *martirensis* was based, one shows pronounced indications of a red nuchal band. Another individual collected subsequent to the appearance of the description has yellow-orange wing and tail webs. The supposed shorter tail of *martirensis* is due to the fact that in three of the seven birds the tails are defective.

Altogether, there are now in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy eighteen flickers from northern Baja California which have been determined to be "*martirensis*." The browner individuals (which include the summer-taken birds) are not distinguishable from *Colaptes cafer collaris* of southern California and doubtless are representative of the resident population. The grayer birds are not distinguishable from flickers of the central interior. Therefore, until other evidence is produced, it would

seem best to drop *martirensis* as a recognizable race. It may be well to call attention to the fact that the name has several years priority over *Colaptes cafer canescens* Brodtkorb (Occ. Papers Mus. Zool. Univ. Michigan, 314, 1935) if formal recognition of the red-shafted flickers of the interior population should ever be deemed advisable.

Dendrocopos villosus scrippsae (Huey)

[= *Dendrocopos villosus hyloscopus* (Cabanis and Heine)]

Recently, W. E. Clyde Todd has proposed (Ann. Carnegie Mus., 30: 312, 1946) that *scrippsae* be dropped as a synonym of *Dendrocopos villosus hyloscopus* on the ground that the slightly smaller size of the former was insufficient to provide sound basis for a separate name. No color or other distinguishing characters were claimed. The series in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy fully bears out Todd's proposal. Sixteen males from the Sierra San Pedro Mártir and Sierra Juárez give average wing and tail lengths of 119.4 and 73.9 millimeters, respectively. Twenty males from central-western and southwestern California in the Diekey and Los Angeles Museum collections give corresponding averages of 124.2 and 76.0 millimeters, and even these small differences tend to be obscured by individual variation. Most birds of the series upon which *scrippsae* was based have very short tails just as Huey has stated; unfortunately they have proved to be misleading. Oberholser, in his revision of the hairy woodpeckers many years ago (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., 40: 611, 1911), made a sound disposition of the case when he stated that Baja California birds expressed the best development of the race *hyloscopus*.

Thryomanes bewickii magdalensis Huey

Magdalena Bewick Wren

This race, proposed (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., 9: 430, Oct. 1, 1942) from the southernmost area known to be inhabited by Bewick Wrens in Baja California, fully merits recognition. It is by far the grayest of the Pacific coast mainland forms of this species. In paleness as well as grayness it recalls in some measure *eremophilus* of the southwestern deserts and *leucophrys* of San Clemente Island. It is thus in abrupt contrast to the exceptionally dark-colored *cerroensis* of the middle portions of the peninsula. In addition to the original series from Santo Domingo (lat. 25°30') and Arroyo Seco in the San Diego Natural History Museum, I have seen seven specimens from Santo Domingo, El Médano, Metancita, and San Jorge in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy. These latter are, in part, juveniles, and it is to be noted that the racial characters are fully as definite as they are in adults.

A mid-peninsular race, *Thryomanes bewickii atricauda*, proposed in the same paper does not appear to me to be separable from *cerroensis*.

Aimophila ruficeps lambi Grinnell

[= *Aimophila ruficeps canescens* Todd]

On the basis of the material in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy in 1926, the definition of this currently accepted race was justified. Specimens collected since that time show it to be a synonym of *Aimophila ruficeps canescens*. In *canescens* there are two extremes of coloration, a

buffy and a grayish manifestation or phase and these occur throughout the range, seemingly regardless of age, sex, or season. This is at variance with the usual behavior of this species which tends normally to a notable degree of uniformity within a given geographic area. The six specimens upon which *lambi* was described are predominantly of the gray extreme, so much so that there was the temptation to accord the supposed race a rather skeptical recognition in spite of some negative evidence in the M. V. Z. collections. However, the collections at the San Diego Natural History Museum show such definite further evidence that there appears not the slightest reason to regard the rufous-crowned sparrows of the northern Baja California mainland as other than *canescens*. No size differences were claimed but it is worth noting that fair samples from southern California and northern Baja California provide almost identical averages.

Aimophila ruficeps sanctorum subsp. nov.

Todos Santos Rufous-crowned Sparrow

Type.—Male, marked as "adult," No. 50124, Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy; Todos Santos Islands, off Ensenada, Baja California, January 13, 1927; collected by Chester C. Lamb.

Subspecific characters.—Ventrally, the darkest and grayest (most plumbeous) of the races of *Aimophila ruficeps*. Dorsally, most nearly similar to the darker and grayer examples of *Aimophila ruficeps canescens* of southwestern California and northwestern Baja California but averaging still darker, the general color of the dorsum and crown close to "Mars Brown" rather than grayish "Kaiser Brown," and with the grayish edgings narrower, darker, and less in evidence. Size somewhat smaller than *canescens*, particularly in length of tail.

Range.—Todos Santos Islands, northern Baja California.

Remarks.—I am at a loss to account for the comment offered by Grinnell (Distribution Summation of the Ornithology of Lower California, p. 173), to the effect that Todos Santos Islands specimens are intermediate between *canescens* and "*lambi*." Actually, they exhibit in remarkably stable form the darkest and most plumbeous underparts of any of the North American races and, so far as I am aware, the darkest to be found in the species.

In this as in other instances of observed speciation trends operative in Baja California and the Gulf area, an insular population has developed one or more characters to be seen more or less intangibly in elements of the adjacent mainland population. In other words, isolation combined with the intensive inbreeding which necessarily must occur within an ecologically suitable, sequestered area of limited extent, has fixed and accentuated tendencies to a point where taxonomic recognition is in order. It may be remarked, further, that the Todos Santos Islands are only about three miles off shore, and climatically differ slightly or not at all from the adjacent mainland.

Specimens examined.—*A. r. canescens*: California, 27 (Ventura County, 1; Los Angeles County, 4; Riverside County, 5; San Diego County, 17). *A. r. "lambi"*: Baja California, 24 (5 miles S. of Mon. 258; S. end Valle de las Palmas; Las Cruces, 20 miles E. of Ensenada; San José, lat. 31°; San Telmo; El Valle de la Trinidad; Valladares; El Cajón Cañon; Boca de la Playa, 16 miles W. of Santo Tomás; N. end

Nachogüero Valley; Mouth of San Telmo River; Colnett; Concepción).
A. r. sanctorum: 24 (Todos Santos Islands).

Measurements.—The following measurements are for males.

	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Depth at Base	Tarsus	Middle Toe Minus Claw
18 <i>canescens</i>	59.7	66.7	10.3	6.4	19.1	14.1
15 “ <i>lambi</i> ”	59.9	67.3	10.3	6.3	19.4	14.0
10 <i>sanctorum</i>	60.4	64.7	10.0	6.2	18.3	13.6
[9 ♀ <i>sanctorum</i> ..	57.8	62.1	8.8	6.1	18.0	13.5]

Amphispiza belli xerophilus Huey

Coastal Bell Sparrow

Although known only from the type locality, Santa Catarina Landing at lat. 29°30' on the Pacific coast, and probably possessing a very limited distribution, this proposed race of the Bell Sparrow appears to be well worthy of recognition. The characters are substantially as given in the original description (Trans. San Diego Soc. Nat. Hist., 6: 229, Dec. 24, 1930), that is to say intermediate in general coloration between *belli* and *cinerea*, although closer to *belli*, but possessing more uniform upperparts and broader flank streaking than either. An additional circumstance to be taken into consideration is that *belli* over the whole of its range in Baja California south to San Quintín and San Martín Island where apparently it abruptly stops, exhibits remarkably stable characters with no suggestion of intermediacy toward *cinerea*. The same observation holds true in regard to the latter race and I can see no trend toward *belli* in the specimens from Santa Rosalía Bay in the Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy. They are not in the best of plumage, however, and in view of the comment by Ridgway (Birds of No. and Mid. Amer., Pt. 1, p. 268, 1901), it is evident that further specimens from this critical locality would be desirable.